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CINCPAC FOR FPA FINNEY

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PREL, PTER, ZA, NK, SK, US, CH
SUBJECT: ZAMBIAN QUESTIONS ON KA-858 INCIDENT: MORE
DETAILS PLEASE AND WHAT DOES THE U.S. WANT?

REF: STATE 27495 (NOTAL)

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY. THE RESIDENT ZAMBIAN AMBASSADOR,
WHO IS ALSO ACCREDITED TO PYONGYANG WHERE HE
JUST SPENT A WEEK IN CONSULTATIONS WITH THE
NORTH KOREAN GOVERNMENT, ASKED FOR FURTHER
DETAILED EVIDENCE OF DIRECT LINKAGE OF THE
NORTH KOREAN GOVERNMENT TO THE KA-858
TERRORIST INCIDENT. HE ALSO ASKED WHAT THE
U.S. WOULD LIKE ITS FRIENDS TO DO, NOTING
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PARENTHETICALLY THAT HIS COUNTRY HELD THE
PRESIDENCY OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN
UNITY. DEPARTMENT-APPROVED INFORMATION
SHARING IN BEIJING COULD STRENGTHEN OUR
LIAISON WITH PYONGYANG-ACCREDITED AND
PYONGYANG-BASED DIPLOMATS. END SUMMARY.

3. M. MAINZA CHONA, ZAMBIAN AMBASSADOR TO CHINA AND
NORTH KOREA, SPENT THE WEEK 18-25 JANUARY IN
PYONGYANG, WHERE HE MET WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER
AND OTHER NORTH KOREAN OFFICIALS AS WELL AS RESIDENT

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: ROBERT J. MARTENS
DATE/CASE ID: 28 OCT 1998 199403292

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AMBASSADORS. ON JAN 27 AMB CHONA DISCUSSED WITH POLMILOFF HIS PYONGYANG VISIT AND HIS "PLIGHT" AS AMBASSADOR OF A COUNTRY FRIENDLY TO BOTH THE UNITED STATES AND NORTH KOREA. (FYI: CHONA WAS PREVIOUSLY ZAMBIA'S AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON AND ALSO VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT. END FYI).

4. CHONA SAID THAT AN ACT OF TERRORISM INVOLVING THE MURDER OF INNOCENT PEOPLE, LARGELY COMMON WORKERS, WAS TERRIBLE AND INCOMPREHENSIBLE. BECAUSE OF THE GRAVITY OF THE CHARGE THAT NORTH KOREA WAS DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE, CHONA SAID THAT IRREFUTABLE EVIDENCE SHOULD BE OFFERED OR AS CLOSE TO IRREFUTABLE AS POSSIBLE BEYOND THE CONFESSION OF THE WOMAN IN SEOUL. CHONA SAID HE AND OTHERS WERE PONDERING THE MOTIVES, WONDERING WHO WOULD POSSIBLY BENEFIT FROM THE DESTRUCTION OF KA-858, SINCE IT DID NOT SEEM CREDIBLE THAT EVEN THE NORTH KOREAN GOVERNMENT WOULD THINK IT COULD BENEFIT FROM A TERRORIST ACT LIKE THAT.

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5. IN DESCRIBING HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER, CHONA SAID THERE WAS NO DIRECT ACCUSATION THAT THE INCIDENT WAS CREATED BY SOUTH KOREA; THE EMPHASIS WAS RATHER ON NORTH KOREA'S DESIRE FOR FRIENDSHIP WITH SOUTH KOREA, KIM IL-SONG'S NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE, AND PROPOSALS FOR MEETINGS BETWEEN BROADLY BASED GROUPS FROM THE NORTH AND SOUTH.

6. IN CONTRAST THE JANUARY 15 STATEMENT OF THE KOREAN CENTRAL NEWS AGENCY, WIDELY BROADCAST ON TELEVISION AND RADIO ON JANUARY 17 AND 18 AND PRINTED IN A FULL-PAGE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE VERSION IN THE JANUARY 23 PYONGYANG TIMES (FULL TEXT SEPTTEL), PLACES THE BLAME ON SOUTH KOREA. CHONA REFERRED TO SEVERAL POINTS WHICH HE SAID WOULD BE EASILY CHECKABLE IN HIS OWN COUNTRY, THOUGH NOT APPARENTLY IN KOREA:

-- THE LISTED AGE OF "MAYUMI" WAS 26, WHICH SEEMED INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE ASSERTION THAT SHE HAD RECEIVED SEVEN YEARS AND EIGHT MONTHS OF SPECIAL TRAINING AFTER SHE HAD COMPLETED A YEAR OF UNIVERSITY, WHICH SHOULD HAVE MADE HER 28 YEARS OLD IN A TYPICAL NORTH KOREAN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM;

-- THERE IS ALLEGEDLY NO PERSON WHO FITS MAYUMI'S

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DESCRIPTION OF HER FATHER WHO SERVED AS A DIPLOMAT
AT THE DPRK MISSION IN ANGOLA; AND

-- MAYUMI USED WORDS IN HER STATEMENT THAT ONLY
SOUTH KOREANS USE, SUCH AS "TIBI" (T.V.),
"SOKJOE" (ATONEMENT), AND "YAKJUBYONG" (RICE WINE
BOTTLE).

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7. CHONA COMMENTED THAT THE NORTH KOREAN GOVERNMENT
WAS GIVING THE INCIDENT UNUSUAL ATTENTION, SINCE
NORMALLY THE POPULATION IS INSULATED FROM ANY NEWS
WITH NEGATIVE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE LEADERSHIP, SUCH

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AS ACCUSATIONS OF TERRORISM. CHONA ALSO SAID THAT HE AND OTHER AMBASSADORS THOUGHT IT TYPICAL OF PYONGYANG TO USE ONLY THE JAPANESE NAMES OF THE TWO TERRORISTS, THUS DEPRIVING THE NORTH KOREAN PUBLIC FROM ANY CHANCE TO CHECK FOR THEMSELVES THE IDENTITIES OF THE FAMILIES.

8. AMBASSADOR CHONA CONCLUDED HIS COMMENTS BY
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ASKING SPECIFICALLY WHAT THE U.S. WAS ASKING OTHER COUNTRIES, SUCH AS HIS, TO DO. CHONA NOTED THAT ZAMBIA HELD THE PRESIDENCY OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY THIS YEAR.

9. COMMENT: BEIJING HOSTS A NUMBER OF AMBASSADORS LIKE CHONA WHO ARE DOUBLY ACCREDITED HERE AND IN PYONGYANG. WE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY RECEIVE MORE REQUESTS FOR FURTHER DETAILED EVIDENCE DIRECTLY LINKING NORTH KOREA TO THE KA-858 BOMBING, ESPECIALLY FROM SUCH AMBASSADORS WHOSE COMMUNICATIONS WITH THEIR OWN GOVERNMENTS ARE OFTEN CUMBERSOME, AT BEST. WE WILL DRAW ON INFORMATION AVAILABLE HERE TO RESPOND TO STANDARD QUESTIONS ON THE INCIDENT. IF DEPARTMENT WISHES US TO RESPOND TO CHONA'S DETAILED QUESTIONS, PLEASE PROVIDE US THE ANSWERS. INFORMATION SHARING IN BEIJING COULD STRENGTHEN OUR LIAISON WITH PYONGYANG-ACCREDITED AND PYONGYANG-BASED DIPLOMATS.

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